

VZCZCXRO8063
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHRN
DE RUEHMR #0158 1391402
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 191402Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4171
INFO RUCNSAD/SADC COLLECTIVE
RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 4598

UNCLAS MASERU 000158

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR AF/S, DS/IP/AF

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [LT](#)
SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT: SOUTH AFRICA CONFIRMS ARREST OF
PRIMARY SUSPECT

REF: MASERU 141 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) In a conversation with Ambassador Nolan, the South African High Commissioner confirmed local press reports that South African police have arrested Makotoko Lerotholi in connection with the ongoing investigation into the April 22 attempted assassination of Lesotho's prime minister. Lerotholi has been publicly named by the GOL as one of the prime suspects in planning the attack (reftel). Alleged mastermind Jersey Ramakatane is not in police custody, and the High Commissioner reiterated that he is a South African citizen.

¶2. (SBU) According to the High Commissioner, the five Mozambican citizens arrested immediately following the attack remain in South African police custody, facing immigration charges only. The Mozambicans and Lerotholi can only be transferred to Lesotho via the formal extradition process; no paperwork has yet been filed by the GOL to begin the extradition process.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The fact that Lerotholi has been arrested in South Africa lends further credence to the theory that he and Ramakatane planned the assassination attempt. Post presumes that the SAG must have seen convincing evidence related to the investigation in order to authorize his arrest, indicating that the GOL theory is less likely to be politically motivated.

NOLAN